United Nations S/2016/891

Security Council

Distr.: General
24 October 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 4 October 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I wish to refer to Security Council resolution 2277 (2016), in which the Council requested me to conduct a strategic review of the mandate of my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region by 30 September 2016, in order to present recommendations for the Special Envoy to better support Member States in the full implementation of their commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, in full complementarity with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and taking into consideration the evolving challenges facing the region.

From 14 to 24 June 2016, a strategic assessment mission that I had dispatched conducted consultations in the region. While visiting Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Kenya, the assessment team held discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives of signatory States and guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, bilateral and multilateral donors and other partners. The review team held additional consultations in New York with members of the Security Council and senior United Nations officials.

The review team reported that the region faces significant challenges that hinder the full implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. These include difficulties and major delays in the neutralization of armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo; mistrust and limited cooperation between Governments in the region; and dwindling interest in the implementation of the Framework, owing in part to pressing domestic issues, notably elections.

Those political and security challenges have constrained the efforts of my Special Envoy to implement the multifaceted mandate entrusted to him under Security Council resolutions 2098 (2013), 2147 (2014), 2211 (2015) and 2277 (2016). Making recommendations to address all of the challenges was beyond the scope of the review, which focused on how my Special Envoy could better assist signatory States in implementing the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and thus contribute to the consolidation of peace, security and cooperation in the region.

All of the review team's interlocutors continue to view the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework as an important political and diplomatic platform, bringing together national Governments and regional organizations to address the challenges confronting the Great Lakes region. They further believe that the mandate of my Special Envoy remains adequate to tackle current and emerging peace and security challenges in the region.

Following extensive consultations, the review team made the following recommendations:

(a) My Special Envoy should dedicate most of his time and resources to high-level political, diplomatic and strategic engagements on peace and security issues;

(b) The Office of my Special Envoy should strengthen its partnership with United Nations presences in the region, as well as with regional and subregional organizations, through a carefully designed division of labour. Under the proposed arrangement, my Special Envoy should guide United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in carrying out activities that further the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, as envisaged in the Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework 2016-2017, which was endorsed by the Security Council in March 2016;

(c) In cooperation with relevant United Nations entities, regional and subregional organizations, donors and partners, my Special Envoy should intensify his efforts to promote timely, credible and inclusive elections in the region, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2211 (2015);

(d) Given that the mandate of my Special Envoy is currently articulated in several pronouncements and decisions of the Security Council, for the sake of clarity and focus, the Council may wish to adopt a consolidated resolution encompassing the entire mandate of my Special Envoy;

(e) With the endorsement of the Security Council, my report to the Council on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework should be retitled "Report of the Secretary-General on peace and security in the Great Lakes region". That recommendation is underpinned by the evolving peace and security challenges facing the region, as well as the gradual expansion of the mandate of my Special Envoy, since the Framework was signed in February 2013. With the proposed new title, my future reports would address all peace and security issues in the Great Lakes region, including issues that may not have been foreseen in the Framework. The review team also suggested that the Security Council dedicate a session to the Great Lakes region once a year, upon receiving my proposed report on peace and security in the region in September. That session should be separate from the consultations of the Council on MONUSCO;

(f) The Office of my Special Envoy should be provided with a lean internal administrative capacity, with appropriate delegation of authority and sufficient administrative flexibility to facilitate the implementation of his mandate;

(g) Given that the need for continued United Nations interaction with the region, including through the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, extends beyond the scope of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, it is

necessary to view the role of my Special Envoy as extending beyond the Framework. That is especially important since many peace and security challenges in the region predated the Framework and will persist in the foreseeable future;

(h) In view of the mandate of the Security Council and the extent of the involvement of the Special Envoy in the region, a more fitting designation would be that of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

I intend to proceed with the implementation of the recommendations of the strategic review that fall within my purview.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon